

File Created by [Blogging Rebirth](#) WP Plugin

# Mediterranean Diet Food Pyramid

For most of us, the most recognized symbol of healthy food is found in the food pyramid. A food pyramid indicates which foods we should eat in which portion sizes so that our body receives the nutrients it requires. If you're creating a healthy diet plan you would do well to look at the Mediterranean diet food pyramid. The [Mediterranean diet](#) is recognized as one of the healthiest diets in the world and is actually endorsed by the Mayo Clinic.

## What is the Mediterranean Diet Food Pyramid

The Mediterranean diet food pyramid is becoming increasingly popular because it is not based on popular food trends. The Mediterranean diet model is founded on thousands of years of tradition within the Mediterranean region. The dietary traditions of Mediterranean countries have long been recognized as very healthy, and the food that they consume is one of the main factors in that healthiness. Knowing the difference between the American diet food pyramid and the Mediterranean diet food pyramid will assist you to improve your health.

The best graphic representation of a Mediterranean diet food pyramid is found in the [Oldways Mediterranean Diet Food Pyramid](#) which was updated in 2009 to include herbs and spices.

The Mediterranean diet food pyramid is significantly different to the traditional food pyramid with which we are familiar. There are certain glaring differences, namely;

1. The Mediterranean diet food pyramid does not have a fats category
2. Red meat is at the top of the Mediterranean diet food pyramid as a food to eat least of along with sweets/desserts.
3. Olive oil is grouped with the fruit and vegetable as something to be consumed frequently



The top portion of the Mediterranean diet food pyramid starts with red meat as a source of animal protein. Red meat and sweets are the least consumed foods in the Mediterranean diet, around 2-3 times per month. The next category, consumed a couple of times per week, are poultry, eggs and dairy products like cheese and yogurt. Next comes fish and seafood which are consumed almost daily. Basically, the Mediterranean diet is low in saturated fats and high in monounsaturated fats and omega 3.

The bottom level of the pyramid is composed of fruits, vegetables, legumes (beans), nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, whole grain bread, whole grain pasta, couscous, brown rice, polenta and other whole grains. People in the Mediterranean rarely eat processed grains (i.e. white flour). A large variety of these fresh foods are eaten daily, and they are usually either raw or lightly cooked. This means that the nutrients are still intact. Cooking foods actually kills most nutrients or renders them undigestible. Hence it is always better to eat food raw or partially

cooked.

The final part of the Mediterranean diet food pyramid is the recommendation of six glasses of water per day and a moderate amount of wine (i.e. one glass of red wine with dinner).

It is interesting to note that olive oil is grouped with the fruit and vegetables in the Mediterranean diet food pyramid. As you can imagine, olive oil is a large part of the Mediterranean diet and many dishes contain it. While it is true that oil is high in calories, olive oil is a healthy monounsaturated fat which is high in antioxidants and contains omega 3 so we can consume a little more as long as we don't go overboard. Monounsaturated oils like olive oil are anti-inflammatory and are good for diseases like asthma and arthritis. They're also heart healthy because the omega 3 lowers LDL ("bad") cholesterol, and raises HDL ("good") cholesterol. The most healthy olive oil is extra virgin olive oil.

You may be wondering how people in the Mediterranean receive their iron since they don't eat a lot of red meat. The answer to this is the same as it would be for a vegetarian. Legumes (beans) and green leafy vegetables are also good sources of iron and the Mediterranean diet is full of these healthy foods. In fact, the whole Mediterranean diet food pyramid consists of healthy foods ensuring that those who follow the Mediterranean diet experience optimum health.

For more information on the Mediterranean diet visit our [Mediterranean Diet](#) category. If you're starting on a Mediterranean diet and need a grocery list you can visit [Mediterranean diet food list](#)

You can also find this article published on [Mediterranean Diet Food Pyramid](#), and on the tag pages [mediterranean diet](#).